

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

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SECDEF

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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DEFENSE FOR IQA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, MCAP,NATO, UK

SUBJ: SEQUEL TO MASON'S ATTACK ON THATCHER SPEECH

REF: (A) LONDON 1325; (B) LONDON 1287

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1. MRS. THATCHER'S 19 JANUARY ANTI-SOVIET SPEECH WAS THE

SUBJECT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMENT BY PRIME MINISTER WILSON, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MASON, REGINALD MAUDLING, OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AS WELL AS MRS. THATCHER HERSELF. OPPOSITION MPS CREATED UNCOMFORTABLE MOMENTS FOR MASON AND WILSON. WHILE NOTHING SIGNIFICANTLY SUBSTANTIVE EMERGED FROM THESE PARLIAMENTARY FORAYS, THE PRIME MINISTER, NONETHELESS, FELT OBLIGED TO DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN MASON "WHO SPOKE FROM KNOWLEDGE IN THESE MATTERS" AND MRS. THATCHER, WHOSE SPEECH AND ANALYSIS "CONTAINED A NUMBER OF LONG-ACCEPTED TRUTHS WHICH SHE HAS JUST DISCOVERED." THATCHER PRESSED THE PRIME MINISTER TO ASSERT THAT IF UK DEFENSES "ARE BECOMING INEFFECTIVE" IN RELATION TO FORCES RANGED AGAINST BRITAIN, THEN THERE SHOULD BE "NO FURTHER DEFENSE CUTS." THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT BRITAIN IS MAKING "A FULL CONTRIBUTION TO NATO AND I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT NATO IS EXTREMELY SATISFIED WITH OUR CONTRIBUTION." HE CONTINUED BY NOTING THAT THE CURRENT REVIEW OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES WOULD NOT "AFFECT THE EFFECTIVENESS" OF BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO.

2. IN THE WAKE OF THE THATCHER/MASON EMBROGLIO, MASON FELT OBLIGED TO EMPHASIZE THAT HIS JANUARY 25 STATEMENT (REFTEL B) WAS MADE ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE SPECIFICALLY DENIED A REPORT THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY WILSON TO ATTACK MRS. THATCHER AS A "COLD-WAR WARRIOR."

3. COMMENT: MRS. THATCHER AND CONSERVATIVE MPS ARE ENJOYING THE ALL TOO EVIDENT EMBARRASSMENT AND DISCOMFITURE CAUSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND MASON BY HER SPEECH. SUPPORT FOR MRS. THATCHER CAME YESTERDAY FROM THE CONSERVATIVE BOW GROUP WHICH ISSUED A STATEMENT STRONGLY CRITICAL OF MASON'S "NAIVETY" IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT MRS. THATCHER IS DELIGHTED TO HAVE FOUND A READY-MADE ISSUE AROUND WHICH TO RALLY THE TORY PARTY BEHIND HER LEADERSHIP.

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